

ECUMENICAL PRESS SERVICE

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EDITOR: JOHN GARRETT · 17 ROUTE DE MALAGNOU · GENEVA · SWITZERLAND
TEL. 36 71 30 · CABLES OIKOUMENE U.S. ENQUIRIES: WCC, 156 FIFTH AVE. NEW YORK 10: TEL. WATKINS 4-8551

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EPS Celebrates First Quarter Century

(Geneva) - The Ecumenical Press Service is twenty five years old this month.

To celebrate the anniversary a special picture supplement goes out with this issue. Designed to reflect some of the many concerns and activities of its sponsoring agencies, the pictures are available from WCC Information, Geneva.

At its launching, as the International Christian Press and Information Service, in 1933, the service set out to give weekly objective coverage in English, French and German editions, on the life of the churches and Christian movements. It rapidly gained recognition as a reliable source. As pioneer in "ecumenical international press work", the service was sponsored in the first place by the former International Christian Council for Life and Work, and the former World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches, the YMCA and the YWCA. Sponsorship grew to include the present participating groups; WCC, IMC, WCCE, YMCA, YWCA, WSCF and UBS.

The formula for the press service in the earlier years of its work was "objective, but not neutral". The news items tried from the beginning to serve the churches and to explain what was happening within the life of the Christian movements. The events of World War II underlined the way in which this aim of objectivity was linked with an attempt to acquaint a much wider public with the struggle

The aim of the Ecumenical Press Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian Movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items. EPS may be freely reproduced in any form with acknowledgment.

of the churches for independence and deeper unity. The objective has always been to remain a clear factual record, but to let the facts speak from within the ecumenical movement and about the movement's meaning and progress.

The first director and editor, Alexandre de Weymarn, served EPS for over twenty years. He built it up as an accepted part of the international family of reliable news services. His knowledge of the Russian language and of European sources rapidly built a reputation for specialised reporting on the life of the European churches. Correspondents from all over the world also sent regular "stories" for EPS and gave it world-wide range. Other priorities in reporting included relationships between Roman Catholics and other Christians. Special attention has always been given to the Orthodox world. Many Roman Catholic "ecumenists" continue to read EPS regularly.

Today EPS is published and sent out from Geneva. The special New York edition has now been suspended. A unified English service crosses the Atlantic each week to subscribers in the US and Canada, mostly by airmail. Since the coming on the scene of the enlarged facilities of the Information Department of the WCC in 1954, the editorial team of EPS comes from the World Council of Churches, but all the sponsoring agencies contribute.

A weekly meeting of the sponsoring bodies' editorial board goes through copy that has been made up after the staff's weekly review of daily newspapers, church press and news services in many languages. The middle of the week sees final editorial work in progress. Translation and adaptation go hand in hand, with the needs of many national and church publics in mind.

EPS is sent out to about 2,700 subscribers in 70 countries. Many of them use it for regular comment columns, news items, radio and television news programmes. European dailies reproduce EPS items, which are also picked up by international wire services and relayed to many lands. Speakers, writers, theological teachers and students, church leaders, local ministers, libraries, Christian press services all over the world, rely on the service as a primary source of balanced information.

Efforts have been made in the last two years to build up a corps of competent voluntary reporters who send copy fast to Geneva from every continent. Most items are shorter than they were twenty-five years ago, but fuller "special reports" and "documents" often supplement the more closely written material aimed to reach news columns. The fuller text of these reports and documents often fills out the issue and helps readers to set the news in focus.

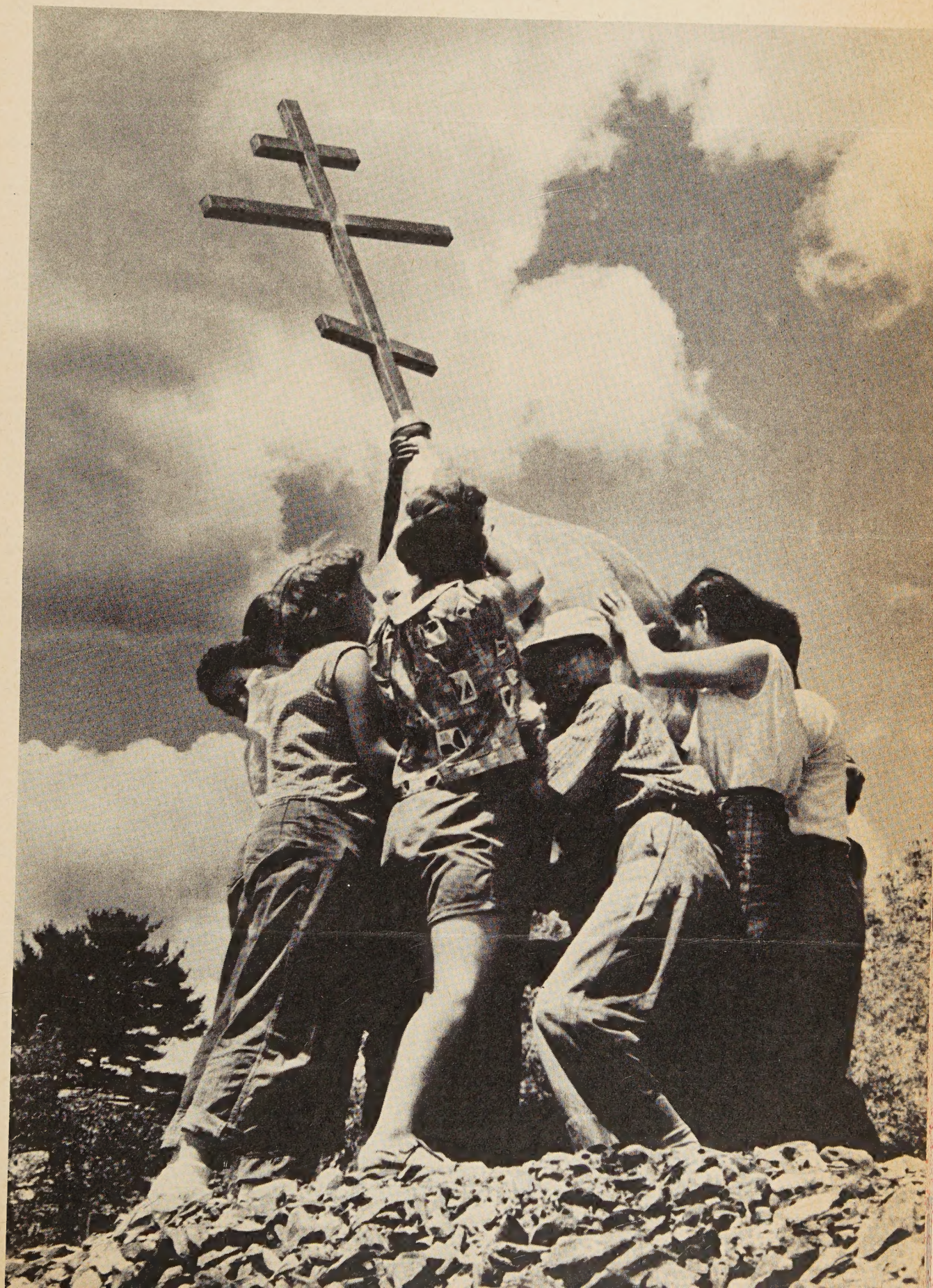
A commemorative dinner was held in Geneva on November 19 to mark the quarter century of the service.

EPS, Geneva

Methodists, Catholics Speak on Race Problem

(New York) - Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church and the Methodist Church in the United States have issued statements calling for action on the question of Negro rights.

The Methodist Council of Bishops, meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio, said on November 13 that "we heartily commend those lay people, pastors and bishops who have demonstrated Christian courage in critical areas. In these days of extreme tensions we commend our people who, while not always sharing the same attitude on integration, are determined to demonstrate in their own lives the qualities of understanding, tolerance and brotherhood."



The bishops also pointed out that "equal justice can be had only under law. To obey the law only when it suits us is to invite others to do likewise and that ultimately leads to anarchy. We therefore call upon our people to treat obedience to and respect for law as a Christian moral obligation and to see to it that, if and when any law needs to be revised strengthened or eliminated, it can be done not by resort to force or violence but by legally established legislative procedure."

The Methodist council unanimously reaffirmed its support of the Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation in public schools.

Meeting in Washington, D.C., on the same day, the Roman Catholic bishops in the United States called for decisive but prudent action to eradicate racial segregation. The 210 bishops who attended the meeting made a plea for "responsible and sober-minded Americans of all religious faiths, in all areas of our land, to seize the mantle of leadership from the agitator and the racist."

The statement said that enforced segregation cannot be reconciled with the Christian view of man because "legal segregation or any form of compulsory segregation in itself and by its very nature imposes a stigma of inferiority upon the segregated people"; and segregation "has led to oppressive conditions and the denial of basic human rights for the Negro".

The Roman Catholic bishops said "we may well deplore a gradualism that is merely a cloak for inaction" but added that "we equally deplore rash impetuosity that would sacrifice the achievements of decades in ill-timed and ill-considered ventures".

The bishops concluded: "It is vital that we act now and act decisively. All must act quietly, courageously and prayerfully before it is too late."

EPS, Geneva

Home for Aged Russian Refugees Opened in France

(St. Raphael) - A home for 108 aged Russian refugees was formally opened on November 14 at St. Raphael, France, in a service attended by four bishops of the Orthodox Church, officials of the French government and representatives of the home's sponsoring agencies.

The home, the former Hermitage Hotel on France's Côte d'Azur, is a joint project of the World Council of Churches, CIMADE, the United States Escapee Programme, the Tolstoy Foundation and Swiss HEKS, the inter-church aid organization of the Swiss Protestant churches. The French government is paying an allowance for the daily expenses of each refugee.

At the same time, it was announced that final arrangements have been made by CIMADE to purchase the Diana Hotel, next door to the Hermitage, as a home for 70 Russian refugees from Hong Kong.

Most of the refugees at the Hermitage, ranging in age from the mid-fifties to 97, have been living in Iran for many years, while others have come from Trieste, Beirut, Turkey, Greece, and Indo-China. The first residents arrived only two days before the opening, filling the home to capacity. Aboard the plane for the more than twenty-hour flight was Mrs. Nastasie Pahina, 97, who had lived in Teheran for fifty years.

Pastor Marc Boegner, president of CIMADE, the service agency of the French churches, and president of the French Protestant Federation, spoke to the new arrivals and called the home a sign of solidarity and brotherly love between the

Orthodox Church and the Protestant churches of France and of the World Council of Churches.

Other speakers included Mr. Roulies, Prefect of Var, Mr. Henry C. Martin of USEP, Mr. Philippe Monod, director of Social Affairs in the French government, Mr. Henry Tremaud of the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Mrs. Tatiana Schaufuss, director of the Tolstoy Foundation, and Metropolitan James of Melita, representative of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople at the headquarters of the World Council of Churches in Geneva. Taking part in a solemn Orthodox "Te Deum" were Metropolitan James, Bishop Methodius, Bishop Sylvester and Bishop Anthony. Also attending the opening were Dr. Edgar H.S. Chandler and Miss Margaret Jaboor, director and assistant director of the WCC's Service to Refugees.

Directors of the Hermitage are Mr. Jean Durand-Gasselin and Miss Katrin Gannechine. EPS, Geneva

Roman Catholics Co-ordinate Latin American Strategy

(Rome, Italy) - A conference of Latin American bishops has been held in Rome to plan future strategy for the Roman Catholic Church in their continent.

The meeting was attended by about fifty prelates and was sponsored by the Latin American Council of Bishops, formed at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1955. The bishops discussed ways of combating the effects of leakage from the Roman Catholic Church to indifferentism and to non-Catholic religious bodies.

In an address to the conference, Archbishop Antonio Samore, secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Extraordinary Affairs and formerly Papal Nuncio to Colombia, stressed that "we are not against anyone or anything, but we simply strive to strengthen our own faith, to increase the number of our priests and to make their work effective".

The archbishop described steps being taken in Belgium, Spain, France, Ireland and Germany to send priests to Latin America, which has a nominal third of the world Catholic population, 160,000,000, and is suffering from shortage of trained clergy. Ninety priests are now being trained at Louvain in Belgium.

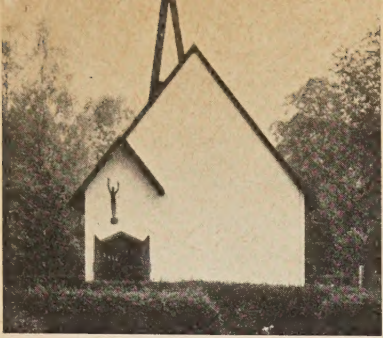
Suggestions discussed by the bishops included use of radio sessions in Spanish to combat poor knowledge of Catholic teaching, provision of more Bibles, Bible-reading campaigns and more catechetical literature. Bishop Agnelo Rossi of Barra do Pirai, Brazil, urged establishment of Catholic cultural and recreational centres for youth. EPS, Geneva

Boys' Town Parliament Meets in Germany

(Marburg) - More than 150 young men, members of the first Boys' Town parliament, met in Marburg, Germany, this month and asked adults to "help us to come to terms with this world".

The 17 to 20-year-old boys made a plea for understanding rather than "too much criticism" but acknowledged that "no generation before that of our parents has had to live through such a revolutionary change in the established order of things, has had to see so many ideals fall to pieces." Their resolutions will be sent to the German Parliament.

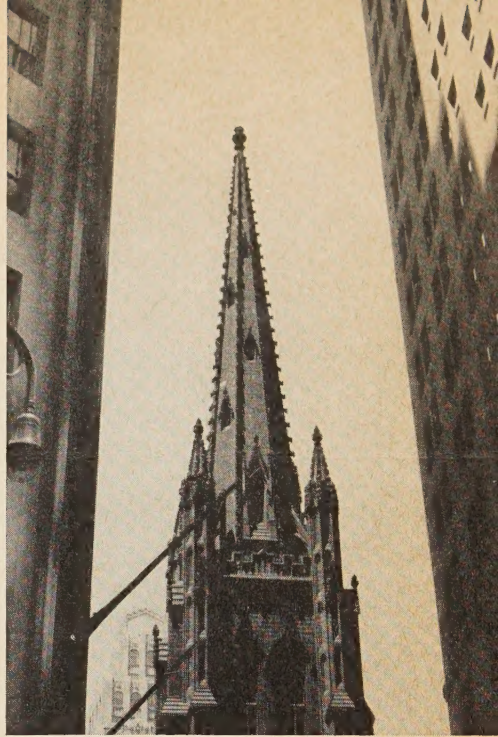
The boys' towns were established eleven years ago by Mr. Arnold Dannemann, president of the Federal Association of German YMCAs and are still carried on in close cooperation with the YMCA. EPS, Geneva



Europe Europa Europe



Asia Asien Asie



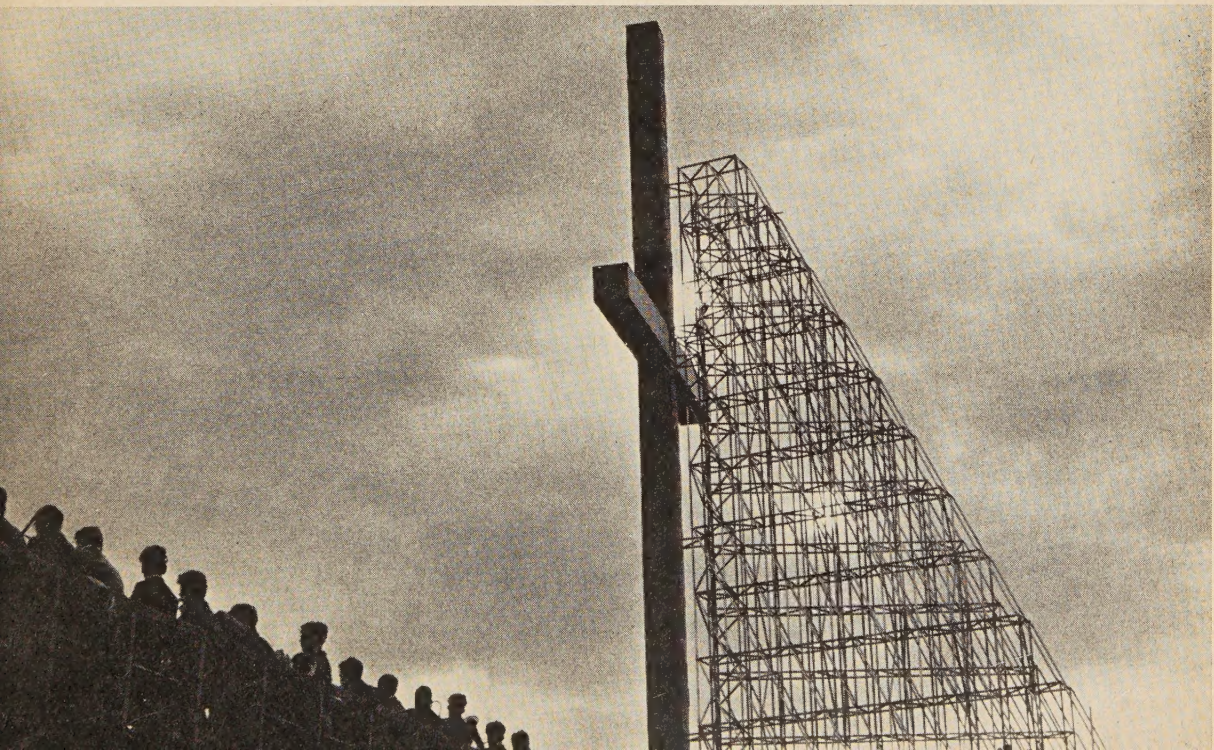
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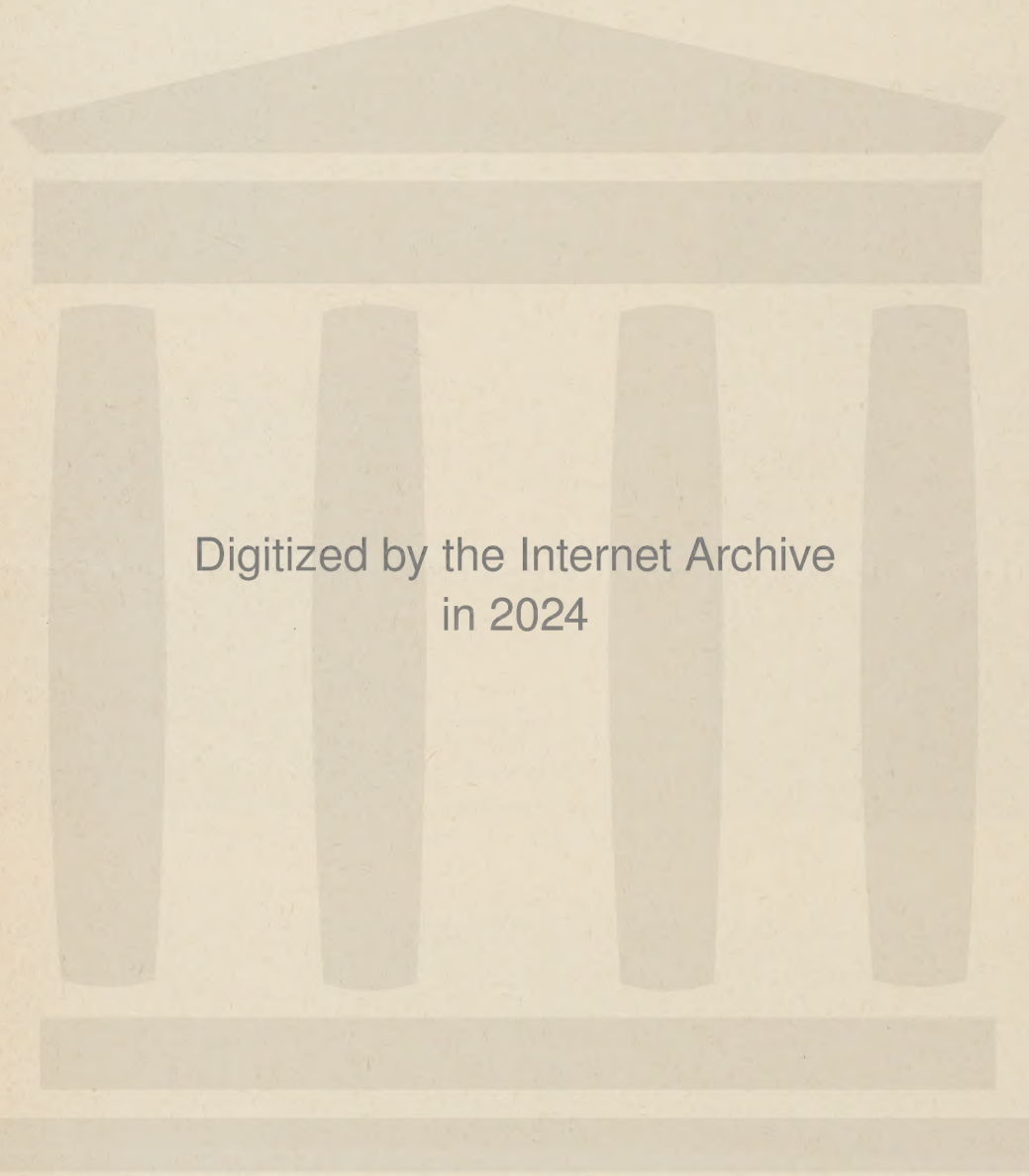
A confirmation in the Anglican tradition
Konfirmation in der anglikanischen Kirche
Une confirmation dans l'Eglise anglicane



A baptism service in Africa
Eine Taufe in Afrika
Un baptême en Afrique



The Kirchentag in Frankfurt, Germany
Der Frankfurter Kirchentag
Le «Kirchentag» à Francfort, Allemagne



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Further Appeal for South African Treason Trial Prisoners

(London) - Christian Action, an organization that has already raised funds for the defence and support of prisoners held by the South African government on charges of high treason, has issued a further "most urgent appeal".

The charges in the trial have been changed and further hearings will be held. In an advertisement in the British church press, twenty-two nationally-known signatories claim that "for two years the agony of these unhappy people, and of all those dependent on them, dragged on: and now", the appeal continues, "the prosecution has found that, if the present indictments were persisted in, acquittal would be inevitable.. What then does the prosecution do? It withdraws the indictment, releases the prisoners on bail - and lets it be known that a new indictment will be drafted and the whole torment be started all over again. That such cat-and-mouse misery could be inflicted by a civilized government in the twentieth century seems incredible", say the signers.

Calling for much greater sums than are now available to help the accused group, the appeal says "this is a debt that white humanity owes to black humanity and to those whites (for some whites are arraigned) who have helped black humanity".

The money raised will also be used in part, according to the advertisement, "to help the victims of racialism in other similar mass trials - including the women arrested in Johannesburg for their refusal to accept the government's discriminating pass laws".

Sponsors of the renewed appeal include the Anglican Bishop of Birmingham, Dr. Leonard Wilson; Sir Kenneth Grubb; Father Trevor Huddleston; Dr. George Macleod; the Bishop of Manchester; Dr. William Greer; Dr. Nathaniel Micklem; Dr. Donald Soper and Dr. Leslie Weatherhead.

EPS, Geneva

Protestant and Orthodox Theological Students Confer

(Heidelberg, Germany) - Protestant and Orthodox theological students met in Heidelberg in late October to study the Orthodox teaching about the Church and its bearing on the ecumenical movement.

The conference was attended by students and graduates of the Evangelical faculties at Bonn, Erlangen, Heidelberg, Münster and Tübingen, and organized by the External Relations Office of the Protestant Church in Germany (EKD) in cooperation with Professor Edmund Schlink, chairman of the German Ecumenical Study Committee, and Professor Leo Zander, lecturer at the Russian Orthodox Institute of St. Sergius in Paris. Various students spoke on the general theme in relation to their own fields of study, including a Greek student working in Germany, who presented the "basic principles of Orthodoxy".

Discussion also covered the best methods of studying the Eastern Church as Orthodox theologians see it, with a survey of new research possibilities opened up by Orthodox faculties and institutes in Athens and Paris.

The Heidelberg meeting was a response to a warning recently given by WCC general secretary W.A. Visser 't Hooft that Protestants were still not adequately equipped for intensive interchurch discussions with the Orthodox. At the same time it continued a series of such meetings inaugurated by the EKD's external relations office in 1948, when German, Russian and Greek theologians met to consider the colouring given to interpretation of Christian sources by confessional background and training.

EPS, Geneva

Swiss Pastors Oppose Atomic Weapons

(Olten) - A resolution disagreeing with government plans to equip the Swiss army with atomic weapons has been proposed at a special meeting of the Association of Swiss Pastors and sent to all association members for a vote.

The proposed statement says that "our obedience to Holy Scripture commands us not to use weapons which possess a power, never known before, that can irreparably harm God's creation. Because the use of atomic weapons threatens to turn defence of one's country into its opposite, because it oversteps the limits of self-defence and causes mass destruction which cannot be justified in the eyes of God, we are forced to reject it."

At the time of the association's annual assembly two months ago, a decision on the subject of rearmament was postponed. EPS, Geneva

In Brief

With the approval of the Archbishop of Canterbury, clergy of the Church of England are to take part in training conferences in the use of radio and television. The BBC will start with a selected group of London clergy in January. The Associated British Cinemas, (ABC), television contractors for the British midlands and north, will also run and finance summer schools for groups of up to twenty clergy.

* *

For the first time, a German city has given land for a sports-ground to a YMCA. In Cologne, where the YMCA building was completely destroyed during World War II, city authorities have just given the association - which does not yet have its own building - a new stadium.

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The largest YMCA building in Germany is under construction in Stuttgart.

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After a lapse of several decades, the German YMCA is resuming its work among the armed forces. During the winter work will be started in ten German garrisons.

* *

The Rev. Helge Fosseus has been appointed by the Church of Sweden Mission as bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Zulu Church in South Africa. The Swedish board had made it possible for the Zulu to elect an African bishop, but reported that the church had asked for Pastor Fosseus, who has been a missionary in South Africa for several years.

* *

The largest budget in its history - \$3,925,720 - has been voted by the board of managers of Church World Service, relief arm of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. The 1959 total is an increase of \$500,000.

* *

Two hundred copies of Bibles printed in Armenian Ararat were sent last week from the headquarters of the British and Foreign Bible Society to a destination in Soviet Armenia. Referred to by Bible Society officials as "the first such consignment for many years", the bulk package was part of a Bible Society programme that involves the sending out of scriptures from the London Bible House at an average rate of six tons every working day.

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The Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church is planning to issue a church news-service from Moscow, in Russian and English.

* *



Refugees can only wait

Flüchtlinge können nur warten

Les réfugiés ne peuvent qu'attendre



help them ?

Und wer hilft ihnen ?

Qui viendra à leur secours ?



Practical help : In Greece (above) and at a work camp (left)

Praktische Hilfe : in Griechenland (oben), in einem ökumenischen Aufbaulager (links)

Aide pratique : en Grèce (ci-dessus), dans un camp de travail (à gauche)



Christmas Eve will be observed in many Dutch towns this year by communal carol singing. Started five years ago by a shop keeper in Utrecht, the idea has spread and last year many towns had to use the largest halls available. Both Protestants and Roman Catholics cooperate in making arrangements.

* *

The American film "The Ten Commandments" cannot be shown in the Soviet Union, according to information received from Eric Johnston, president of the Motion Picture Association in Washington. It was one of ten films offered by representatives of the American film industry to the USSR. No reason was given for the refusal to accept it.

* *

The authorities in the German Democratic Republic again granted permission for people from West Berlin to visit graves of near relatives in East Germany on November 19 (the Day of Prayer and Repentance).

* *

According to the last report received from Harry Thomsen, who works in the Scandinavian Mission to Buddhists, forty new religious bodies have sprung up in Japan since the war. One-fifth of the population belongs to them. Harry Thomsen regards this as a sign of the search for truth.

* *

The Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church of Bulgaria has published a letter in its magazine, inviting the clergy and laity of Bulgaria to take action in the struggle against nuclear weapons and for general disarmament, which is being started this month by the World Peace Council.

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Celebrations were held by the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church of Bulgaria for the 50th anniversary of the ordination of Dr. Stefan Zankov. Dr. Zankov was a pioneer in the ecumenical movement, and is professor of Canon Law at the theological faculty of Sofia.

* *

Up to one hundred letters of thanks come daily from German internees and prisoners of war in the USSR to acknowledge the sending of parcels from the Evangelical Church's organization that supervises the work in Munich.

* *

At a conference of exiled East German evangelical Christians held at Königsfeld in the Black Forest it was stated that serious setbacks had been encountered since World War II in the former German provinces now governed by Poland, where census figures show that Protestants have shrunk to about one percent of the population.

EPS, Geneva

THE PICTURES in this issue are from a new illustrated handbook on THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES. The handbook is available at 2 Swiss Francs, 2s. 6d., or 50¢ from WCC Information, Geneva. Concessions for bulk orders.

These and many other pictures illustrating church life and some news items in EPS can also be obtained from the WCC's photo files.

